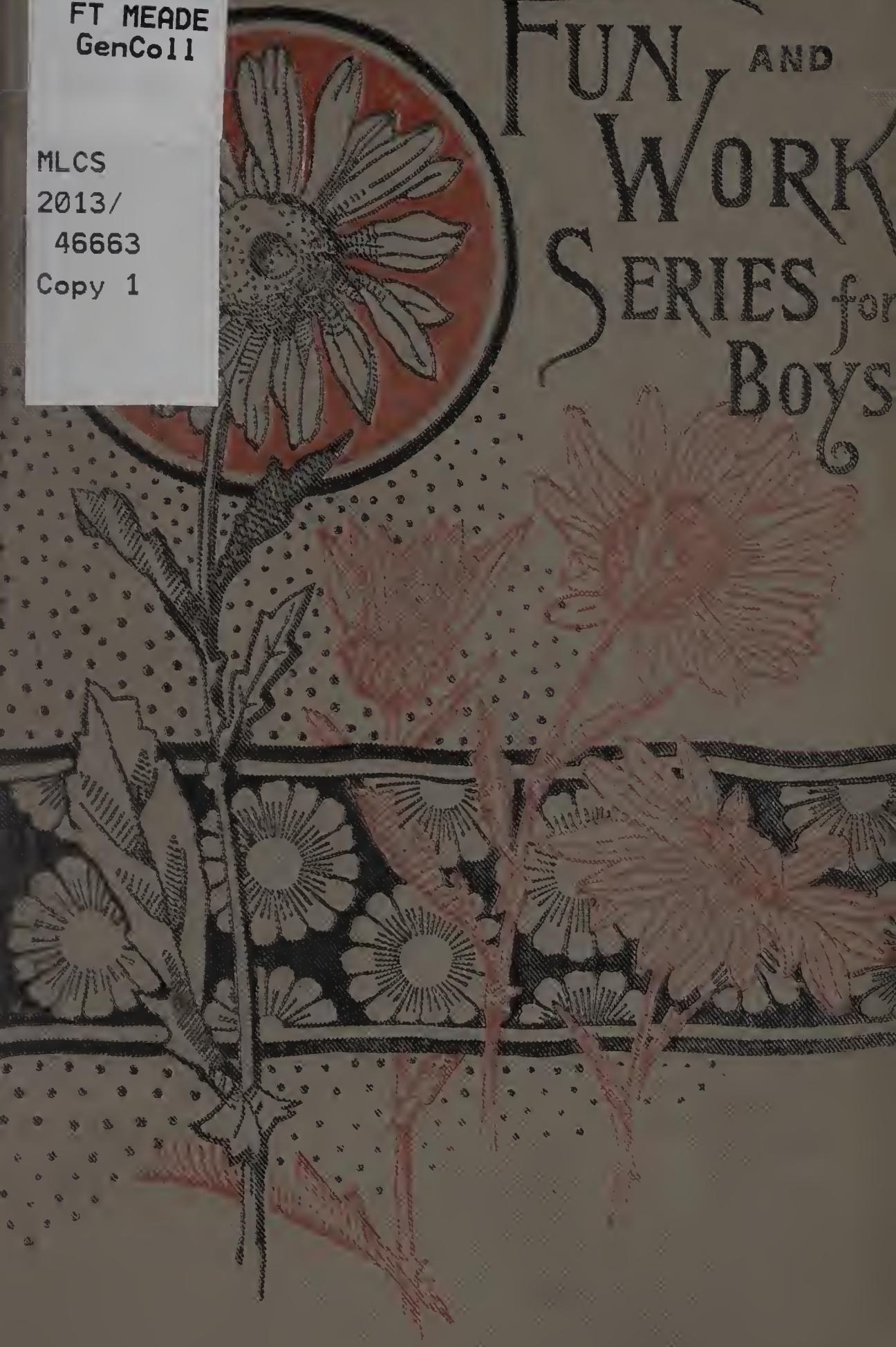


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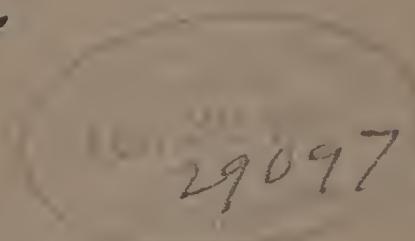
FAITHFUL ROVER,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

“LITTLE KITTY’S LIBRARY,” “DOLLY’S CHRISTMAS CHICKENS,”
“MAGGIE AND THE SPARROWS,” ETC.



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I.

Faithful Rover.

THE trouble with Dotty Doolittle was, that she loved to play and read story-books so much that she never wanted to do any thing useful. So, when her mother called her to study her lessons, or to amuse her little brother, or to rock her baby sister, she was very apt to come with a scowling brow or pouting lip, instead of the bright, happy smile which had been upon her face only a few minutes before, when she had been running races.

with Rover, or swinging with her doll, or playing with her dear friend, Lily Lee, who lived in the next house.

“O mamma!” said she, one morning; “I am so glad that I am not a grown-up lady, to have to sit still so long as you do, and sew so much. I should not mind sitting still sometimes, if I had nice story-books to read, but I am sure I should not like to write so many letters; and then never to play or run about must be very disagreeable.”

Her mother smiled at the strong expression of dislike upon her little girl’s face, as she said all this.

“Perhaps, my darling,” she replied, “when you are a lady you will prefer sitting still and sewing and writing, to

play ; and will choose to walk rather than to run and jump. Now that you are a little girl, I am glad to see you skip about and have a good time, and your happiness makes me happy. Yet I would like to see you sometimes willing to be useful. God has given to every thing that he has made in this world something to do. Your work is to help me when I need you, and to study a little every day so that as you grow older you may be more useful, and that when you no longer care for play you can be happy in other ways.”

“ And what is Rover’s work, I wonder ? ” said Dotty, as she put down her needle to pat the dog, who was lying by her side, waiting for her to finish her sewing, that they might have their

usual frolic ; for Dotty was hemming a handkerchief for her papa, or she would not have kept still all that time to hear all her mother had to say.

“ O, Rover’s work is to guard the house,” replied her mother, “ and to take care of you when you go off to walk. Do you not remember how he brought your father’s cane to him the other day when it fell into the water ? Whatever he has to do, he does most faithfully.”

The very next day Dotty learned a lesson of faithfulness from Rover which she does not mean to forget.

It was Saturday, and she had no lessons ; but directly after breakfast, her mamma gave her a note to take to a lady who lived almost a quarter of a mile distant.



“ After you come back, Dotty,” said her mamma, “ you may play until it is time for baby to go to sleep ; then I want you to amuse your little brother ; for nurse has to go to see her sick mother to-day, and I have something very important to attend to.”

Dotty was very willing to take the note, but she looked very cross at the thought of having to stay in the house to amuse her little brother, for she had planned to go off in the woods with Lily that morning. However, she said nothing about it, for she thought there might be time to go after her mother was ready to take her brother again.

She had a very pleasant walk with the note, or rather run ; for Rover



went with her, and she never walked with him by her side. The lady who received the note gave her a spray of beautiful roses; it was early in the summer for them, and they were the first Dotty had seen that season, so she was much pleased with them.

She reached home quite out of breath from running, and threw herself on the step of a little piazza which was by the side of the house to rest, while Rover took his station near her. All at once she remembered having heard that dogs would take care of things for their masters, if they were told. "I mean to see if Rover will," she said to herself; so she threw the spray of roses down before him, and said, —

“ Now, Rover, take care of them ; do you hear ? take care of them.”

The dog had evidently been taught that lesson before ; for he kept his place by the flowers as Dotty moved away from him, and never offered to follow her, as he generally did.

She only meant to leave him for a few minutes, while she went into the house for a glass of water in which to put her roses ; but as she passed through the hall on her way to the dining-room, her attention was attracted by a book which she had left there on the sofa the evening before, containing a story which she had not finished. She took it up, intending to read but a page or two ; but she became so much interested that

she forgot all about the roses and the dog.

She was reading when her mamma called her to go to the nursery to play with her little brother. Still thinking only of her story, she took the book with her. But Master Arthur had no mind to let her read ; he seized the book with both hands, saying, —

“ No, No ! blocks ! blocks ! chickie ! chickie ! ”

So the story had to be left, and she seated herself on the floor to build a pen in which to drive his toy chickens. This was a favorite play of his, because Dotty always became so excited, and said “ Shoo ! shoo ! ” so loud that it amused him greatly. But Dotty had played it so many times that she was

very tired of it ; and so, when she had it all arranged, and had made believe drive the chickens for a few minutes, she said, “ Now Arthur shoo the chickies himself ; ” and took up her book again.

But Arthur, in his efforts to imitate Dotty, soon had the blocks and chickens all tumbled together in a heap on the floor, and then he went to the closet for more playthings to tempt Dotty to play again. He attempted to lift from the shelf the box containing his menagerie, which he could just reach by standing on tiptoe. But as he pulled it toward him, a box which was on top of it came too, and, sliding off, tumbled on to the floor, striking his little curly head on the way. It

was a heavy, wooden box, containing tin soldiers, and it gave him a pretty severe blow.

Of course Dotty's book was thrown down in an instant, and she was by his side, trying to comfort him. His cries brought his mother, and also awoke the baby, who was sleeping in the next room; so Dotty had to be left to bathe the lump which the box had raised on his head, while her little ladyship was attended to.

Dotty felt very sorry, for she loved her little brother dearly, and she tried in every way to make him forget his pain; but he did not cease crying until she proposed taking him into the garden. This suited him exactly; and, promising her mother to be very

watchful this time, Dotty was allowed to lead him down stairs, and out into the garden. They went out of the front door ; so they did not see Rover, and Dotty was feeling too sorry for her carelessness to think of him.

She led Arthur up and down the paths, picked flowers for him and made him very happy, until suddenly she heard some one calling her. Looking toward the end of the garden, she saw Lily standing on the other side of the fence.

“ Come, Arthur, let’s see how fast we can run,” said Dotty, as she seized the little fellow’s hand and hurried him along to the place where Lily was waiting. She had a new bonnet in her hand, which she had just made

for her doll, and Dotty soon became so much interested in admiring that, and then in planning about going to the woods that afternoon, to look for wild flowers, that she forgot about caring for her little brother.

Her attention was called to him by hearing a sudden scream, followed by loud cries, and, running to the end of the path on which she was standing, she found him seated on the ground behind a bush, holding up one of his little fingers, which was already becoming red and swollen.

“Bad fly! bad fly!” he screamed, “in the flower.”

Poor little boy! he had attempted to pick flowers for himself, and not seeing that a bee was helping himself

to some honey from a blossom which he fancied, he put his finger directly upon it, and the bee, not liking to be pinched, stung him. Dotty hurried back to the house with him, trying to comfort him by saying, “Mamma will make it all well;” but it was some time before even mamma could make him forget the pain. Fortunately, baby was willing to lie in her crib, so his mother could hold him on her lap after she had bound up his finger. Dotty brought one plaything after another to amuse him, but nothing could tempt him to leave his mother. At last she said, “Would Arthur like to see Rover?” Yes, he seemed pleased at that idea; but where was the dog?

She ran down stairs, calling “ Rover ! Rover ! ” She heard a short, quick bark in answer ; going to the side of the house from whence the sound proceeded, she found him where she had left him two hours before, still keeping watch over the roses, which were now beginning to fade.

Dotty put her arms around his neck, and hugged him tight, exclaiming, “ You dear, good dog ! have you been here all the time ? And I forgot all about you. Mamma is right ; you are faithful.”

How ashamed she felt of her own unfaithfulness. If she had only watched her little brother as carefully as Rover had the flowers, he would not have been hurt. She picked up the roses,

and went to tell her mamma the whole story, calling to Rover to follow, which he did very willingly, glad to be relieved from his charge.

Arthur forgot the pain in his finger when he saw the dog and the flowers ; and his mamma was much interested in hearing of the lesson Dotty had learned from Rover. The flowers soon revived when they were placed in water, and looked fresh for many days.

Little children often think the duties they have to perform are so trifling that it is no matter if they do neglect them ; but Jesus does not think so. Nothing that He gives us to do is too small to be noticed by Him, and He looks with favor on all little ones who do whatever they have to do “ heartily, as to the Lord.”



II.

Alfred's Ten-cent Piece.

“ CHERRIES ! fine ripe cherries ! here they go, ten cents a quart ! ” This is what Alfred Hope heard one morning, as he sat on the back steps getting his fishing-line in order, to use that afternoon.

“ Hallo ! ” said he, “ there’s old Isaac with cherries to sell. I believe I’ll buy some ; ” and he thrust his hand in his pocket, to see if the ten-cent piece his father had given him that morning was safe.

Yes, there it was, keeping company with slate-pencils, knife, chalk, pieces of string, and all the various articles which usually find their way into the pockets of school-boys. Then, seizing his hat, he ran out of the gate after Isaac, who by this time had trundled his wheelbarrow some distance down the lane.

Alfred soon caught up with him, however, and in a few minutes the ten-cent piece was exchanged for a hatful of the fine large cherries which Isaac had picked that very morning from a tree in his garden, where the vegetables which filled the rest of the barrow had also grown.

Alfred seated himself on the ground to enjoy eating some of his cherries at

once. They were so delicious that he thought he must take some to his little sister ; but he was sure she would like them best if tied in bunches, so he proceeded to prepare them for her. While he was thus engaged, his Cousin Frank came up.

“ O Alfred ! ” he exclaimed ; “ what splendid cherries ! give me some.”

“ Why can’t you buy them for yourself ? ” replied Alfred. “ Old Isaac is only just over there ; I got them from him.”

“ Oh ! my money is all in my tin bank at home,” said Frank ; “ and it is too much trouble to go after it.”

“ Yes, that’s just the way,” said Alfred ; “ you save up all your money like a regular old miser, and then ex-

pect other fellows to give you their good things."

"Well, I wouldn't be so stingy," returned Frank. You're worse than Joe over there; he never has any money to spend because he gives it all away."

"You needn't get mad so quick, and call me stingy. I didn't say I wouldn't give you any. Hallo, Joe!" Alfred continued, calling to Frank's brother, who stood near, "come get some cherries. Sit down, Frank; let's have a feast," and Alfred, as generous as he was careless, after laying aside a bunch of cherries for his mother, and one for his sister, began to dispense his fruit to his cousins, who seated themselves on the grass beside him.



Joe would not take many ; he would have refused entirely, if he had not been afraid Alfred would feel hurt. He did not think it was fair for him to save his money and then take from other people, even though he meant to do good with his money.

But no such scruples restrained Frank, and he ate more than his share.

“Papa,” said Alfred when he was ready to start for Sunday school the next morning, “will you give me some money for the missionary collection ? You know our school is going to help build that church out in Iowa, and I promised my teacher that I would bring five cents every Sunday.

“Why do you not give part of the

ten cents I gave you yesterday?" said his father.

"Because I didn't think of the collection yesterday, and I spent it for cherries," replied Alfred.

"Well, here is five cents more for you," said his father, handing him a piece of money; "but try to be more careful another week, for I am sure you will enjoy the feeling that you are giving your own money, more than if you always give mine."

Frank and Joe were in the same class with Alfred, and when it was time for collecting the money, Joe was ready with his as usual; but Frank had none to give. He preferred to keep it in his nice little tin bank.

Alfred thought of his father's words



as he handed in his money, and determined that another week he would save some of his own.

He told his mother so that afternoon, when they had their usual quiet Sunday talk.

“But,” said he, “what is a boy to do when there are so many nice things to buy? and I never keep all I get for myself. There was Frank and Joe came along just as I had bought my cherries, and I gave part to them. To be sure, Joe would not take many, though I wanted him to, because he saves his money to give away; but Frank ate more than I did, and he had no money for the collection this morning either.”

“I should not like you to be selfish

or mean, my dear boy," said his mother, "and I hope you will always be ready to share your pleasures with others. But I do not want you to buy whatever you see simply because you think it will taste good ; that is self-indulgence. The next time you are tempted to do so, think a moment whether you had not better save your money for something else. It is a good plan to lay aside a part of all the money you receive to do good with. The rest use as you think best, in buying something that will give you lasting pleasure, or presents for your friends. Yet I think that your wants are so well supplied now by your parents and friends that you will soon find that you will need to buy but little, and

that the portion which you lay aside to give away will be the larger, for you will learn the *pleasure* of giving.”





III.

Gathering Apples.

“MAMMA! mamma!” said little May Somers, running into the house with her arms full of rosy apples; “see what Mr. Hopkins has given me.”

“O what beauties!” said Sam, throwing down the book which he had been reading, to take the apple which his sister offered him. “Where is Mr. Hopkins?”

“He is in the orchard,” said May, “and he has commenced to gather his

apples for market. He had a large basket full when he gave me these. He said he wished he had a boy to help him ; he had offered some of the boys around here six cents a bushel, if they would work for him ; but they were all engaged."

"Mamma, may I go and help him ?" said Sam, eagerly ; "it would be such a good way to earn money for building the Kansas church, and I have not been able to get much this summer."

"I fear that you will soon become weary, and give up just as Mr. Hopkins is depending on you," said Mrs. Somers.

"O no, mother ! I will work just as steadily as Mr. Hopkins himself, I promise you."



So his mother gave her consent, and off he ran to the orchard.

Mrs. Somers and her children had been boarding for the summer at Mr. Hopkins's farm-house, and now they were staying later in the autumn than usual, for the benefit of May's health, which was very delicate. The Sunday school which Sam attended in the city had agreed to raise as much money during the year as they could toward building a church in Kansas ; and it was to add to that fund that Sam was so anxious to earn money by picking apples.

Mr. Hopkins was very glad to have his help, and set him to work immediately. He had picked all the finest apples from one tree by hand, and he

was ready to shake off the rest, so Sam had come just at the right time to pick them up from the ground as they fell. The best of these were to be put in one basket, to be used in the house ; the others in another basket, to be fed to the animals.

Sam worked most industriously until dinner-time. May helped him a little while ; but it made her head ache to stoop, so she went to the piazza to play with her doll. In the afternoon she brought a book and sat under the apple-tree, and read him a story while he worked.

The next morning, Mr. Hopkins was not ready to go to the orchard very early, so Sam had time to learn and say his lessons, as usual, to his mother.



He had scarcely commenced his work with the apples, when his two cousins, who were staying at a farm-house near Mr. Hopkins's, came for Sam to go fishing with them. It was a great temptation to him; but he remembered his promise to his mother to work steadily, so he told them he could not go; and not all their persuasions could induce him to change his mind.

The work seemed rather dull after they had gone, and he could not help thinking how much pleasanter it would have been under the willow-trees, fishing in the brook, than picking up apples. But his mother, who had seen his cousins with their fishing-rods go off without him, knew what a trial it must be to him not to accompany them;

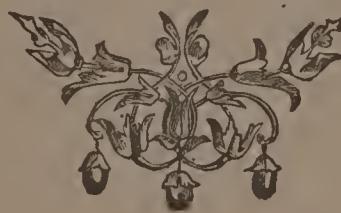
so she took her sewing out to the orchard, and, seated there on a camp-stool, told him a pleasant story, which made the time pass quickly.

By the end of the week the apples were all gathered, and Sam felt quite repaid for the self-denial and fatigue which his work had cost him, when he thought of the pleasure of handing the money which he received for it to his Sunday-school teacher, with the consciousness that he had earned it all.

It made him feel in haste to go home ; but Mr. Hopkins said he must go fishing with him first, for he had heard all that had passed between Sam and his cousins under the apple-tree. So, one morning he took them all in his wagon to the beach, about three miles off, and

they went out in a boat and caught a fine lot of fish.

The next spring, when a drawing of the church in Kansas was shown to the Sunday school, Sam felt very happy that he had helped to build it, and he told his mother that he hoped to preach in it some day.





IV.

Annie and her Bird.

“MAMMA,” said a little pleading voice, “may I come in your bed? it thunders so loud, and I am so afraid.” But mamma was fast asleep, and she heard neither the roar of the thunder, nor her little girl’s feeble voice as she called from the next room.

Annie lay still for a few moments, listening to the patterning of the rain; then came a flash of lightning so bright that she could see every object in her little room; it was followed immediate-

ly by a loud peal of thunder, which seemed to shake the house to its very foundation.

“O mamma, mamma!” screamed Annie, in an agony of terror; “don’t you hear the thunder? What shall I do?” Then her fear of being alone overcoming the dread which she always had of walking from her room to her mamma’s in the darkness of the night, she sprang from her bed, and in an instant was by her mother’s side.

The last clap of thunder, and her little girl’s loud call, had both together awakened Mrs. Gray, and she was just about to go and comfort Annie, when she felt the small, cold hand laid upon her cheek. In a moment the little trembler was folded close in her

mother's loving embrace, and with her head upon the same pillow, Annie felt safer than she would have felt anywhere else. Her fear was not all gone, though, and her mother felt her arms clasp her tighter at each flash of lightning and peal of thunder.

"This is our Father's storm, Annie," said Mrs. Gray. "Can we not trust Him to take care of us?"

"But he seems so far off, mamma," said the child.

"Yet He is not, my darling; He is close at hand; and to me He seems to be telling us that, though He is so great and powerful, as this storm shows Him to be, He will take care of the feeblest of His creatures." Then, in a low

voice, Mrs. Gray sang these sweet words :—

“ Howl, winds of night, your force combine ;
Without His high behest,
Ye cannot in the mountain pine
Disturb the sparrow’s nest.”

Annie could not understand all the words, but they soothed and comforted her ; and, while the sound of the thunder rolled far away in the distance, growing fainter and fainter as the shower passed off, she fell asleep with these last lines sounding in her ears :—

“ Ye cannot in the mountain pine
Disturb the sparrow’s nest.”

In the morning, when she awoke, the sun was shining clear and bright, and the rain-drops glittered on the trees like clusters of diamonds. A little bird’s

joyous song, close by Annie's window, recalled the words her mother had sung in the night.

"A good many little birdies were taken care of last night, I suppose," she said to herself; "I wonder if they felt afraid in the storm?"

After breakfast, she went out to see how her garden looked; all the leaves from the roses, which had been in bloom the day before, were scattered on the ground; but there were plenty of buds freshened by the rain, ready to take their places; and though some of the slender plants were blown down, they were not broken, and only needed to be tied to stakes to look as well as ever.

"Yes, mamma was right," said

Annie ; " God did take care of every thing in the storm."

Just then she heard a faint chirp close at her feet ; and, looking down, she saw a little bird hopping along, not yet able to fly.

" Why, poor little birdie," she said ; " where did you come from ? Did the wind blow you from your nest ? " And she looked up in a tree which was near, trying to see if the bird's home was there ; but if it was, the leaves so hid it that she could not find it. Neither was there any father or mother bird near, to watch over the tender nestling.

Annie lifted it carefully from the ground, and placing it in the palm of one hand, she covered it carefully with the other, so that it could not flutter

down to the ground again, and carried it into the house. Her mamma would know what to do with it, for she always knew what to do with every thing.

“Poor little thing,” said Mrs. Gray, as she looked at the bird; “it is too young to leave its mother yet; it must have fallen from an over-crowded nest. I do not believe it can pick up food for itself yet.”

“Then must it die?” asked Annie, piteously.

“No,” said her mother, “I think old Peter will know how to feed it. We will take it to him presently.”

“Oh! perhaps he will,” said Annie, her tone changing to one of joy; “shall we go soon?”

“Yes, in a very few minutes; but first

get a little basket, in which to carry the bird, and some soft cotton."

"Who is old Peter? and how does he happen to know so much?" said Annie's cousin Julia, a young lady who had come to make them a few weeks' visit.

"Oh you must go with us and see him," said Mrs. Gray, as she arranged the bed for the bird; "he is an old man who used to get his living by gardening; but when he became too infirm to work out of doors much, he undertook to raise birds for sale, and he has a large collection now, and makes a good deal of money by selling them; for he tames them so nicely that people will come from quite a distance to buy one of his birds."

It was a very pleasant walk to Peter's cottage. When Annie, with her mother and cousin, reached it, the door stood open, and a very pretty sight presented itself to them. Peter was sitting on a wooden bench, with a little bird perched upon his finger, which he was feeding by means of a stick, which he dipped into a dish of bread and milk, which one of his granddaughters was holding on his knee. Her little sister was leaning on his shoulder, watching the little bird eat, with much delight; and even the dog Trip seemed interested, though perhaps he was thinking what a nice plaything the bird would make for him. The children's mother stood by, holding the cage which was to be the home of the little creature.

Peter welcomed his visitors very politely, and told them he was taming that little bird, which he had just taken from its mother, for a young lady. When its breakfast was finished, and its cage hung up, he took the cover from Annie's basket, and said he would feed her bird as it rested there in its bed of cotton.

"It will feel less afraid there," he said.

But it did not seem frightened at all ; it chirped, and opened its mouth, as if it knew that he could feed it ; and as it did so, Peter placed a morsel of food in its throat with his little stick, which it swallowed as readily as if it had been used to being fed in that way all its life.

“If you will leave it with me a few days, Miss Annie,” said the old man, “it will soon learn to feed itself, and then it will be a nice pet for you ; it is a young robin, and will be a fine singer, I think.”

Annie was very glad to leave the bird in such good hands, and after it had eaten as much as it would, the ladies looked at the numerous families of birds which were in the cages which hung about the room, and then bade Peter good-by, and started for home.

“Mamma,” said Annie, as they walked along, “I have been wondering why God did not take care of this little bird in the storm.”

“I think He did take care of it,” said her mother.

“Why, mamma! He let it fall out of the nest.”

“Yes, and He let it fall just where you could see it and pick it up,” replied her mother. “I am sure, darling, it is now as well taken care of as if it were in the crowded nest from which it fell; you know Jesus tells us that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father’s notice, and this is only a new proof to me of the truth of that saying.”

“O yes, mamma!” said Annie; “I see now, and our Father sent me to take care of the little bird.”

“And, my child, the next time that you are afraid as you were last night in the storm, remember the rest of our Saviour’s words: ‘Fear not, therefore,

for ye are of more value than many sparrows.'"

Annie thought that she could not soon forget this beautiful lesson of trust in our Father's care which the bird had taught. She was often reminded of it when the little robin came to live in the large cage which her mother provided for him, and she heard him warble his sweet song of praise, sometimes hanging on the piazza, and sometimes flying about her room or perching on her shoulder.





V.

Little Words of Kindness.

IT was haying time, and every one at Mr. Hastie's farm was very busy. There was a heavy crop of hay this year, and extra hands were hired to bring it in, while Mr. Hastie and his two sons worked as hard as any one. In the house, Mrs. Hastie bustled about preparing dinner for the hay-makers, with no one to help but Jeannette, a young orphan girl about fourteen years old, whom she had taken to train in household work.

Jeannette was naturally very careless, and Mrs. Hastie not very patient; so now, when she was so much hurried, her tones were more than usually loud and shrill, as she sent the girl hither and thither to attend to various duties. No wonder that little Willie Hastie, a gentle, quiet child, who had just returned from his grandmother's house, was glad to escape from the confusion by taking his little pail to pick blackberries in the field not far from the house.

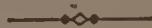
The dinner was all ready to place upon the table, and Mrs. Hastie had blown the horn to call the men from the field, when she noticed that the pitcher of water was wanting.

“Here, Jeannette,” she said, “go to

the well as quick as you can ; for Mr. Hastie always wants a drink of fresh, cool water as soon as he comes in."

Jeannette scarcely waited to hear the last of the sentence before she was off, she was so anxious to please Mr. Hastie, who was always so kind to her. But, alas ! she was too quick this time ; for just before she reached the well, she stumbled over a stone, which in her hurry she had not noticed, and, in trying to save herself from falling, the pitcher slipped from her hand and was broken. "O, what shall I do ?" she said ; "what will Mrs. Hastie say ?" and she covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

The next moment some one pulled her dress gently, and she heard a soft



voice say, “Don’t cry so, Jeannette ; I will tell my mother that you did not mean to break the pitcher, and I will give her all my money to pay for it.”

It was little Willie Hastie, who was on his way home with his blackberries. He had seen the pitcher fall from her hands, and his tender heart was much troubled at her distress.

His kind words were very comforting to the poor girl, but she could not make up her mind to go to the house with him when he proposed it.

“O, I cannot !” she said ; “I have nothing to carry the water in, and what will your father say ?”

“Well, you wait here, then,” said Willie ; “and I’ll ask my mother for a

pail, and you can bring that full." So the little fellow ran off toward home, and Jeannette began to pick up the broken pieces.

Willie met his mother at the door, as he came up out of breath with running so fast.

"Where can that girl be?" she said; "here's your father and all the men at the table, and not a drop of water to drink." But when she heard of the disaster, she was more out of patience still; "such carelessness! she never heard the like."

"Please don't scold her, mother," said Willie, pleadingly; "she is very sorry; and if you will give me a pail, she will bring it full in two or three minutes. And I guess I've got money

enough in my pocket-book to buy another pitcher."

Mrs. Hastie laughed at this, and said she did not care much for the pitcher, but she wanted the water; so, giving him a pail and a kiss at the same time, she went into the house, thinking what a darling boy he was.

Willie soon returned with Jeannette, who brought a brimming pailful of water.

"Please, ma'am, I'm very sorry," she said, as Mrs. Hastie took it from her hand to fill another pitcher which she brought from the pantry.

"O well, it can't be helped now," was the reply; "only be more careful the next time." And Jeannette carried the pitcher to the table, won-

dering at Mrs. Hastie's unusual gentleness.

"It's all because of little Willie," she said to herself; "what a dear little boy he is." And that is what everybody said who knew him. He loved fun, and could play as well as any other boy; but he was never rude or quarrelsome, and his gentleness made every one else about him gentle.

That evening, after Jeannette's work was done, she sat on the stone step in front of the kitchen-door, watching the stars as they came out, one by one, when Willie came and sat by her and laid his head upon her lap.

"Willie," she said, "I wish I could be good and gentle like you, and that people would love me as they do you."



“ My grandmother says,” replied Willie, “ that every one who loves Jesus will try to be kind and gentle, as He was when He lived here upon the earth ; if we ask Him, He will help us ; and, Jeannette, don’t you know I am Jesus’ little boy ? ”

Just then Willie’s mother called him to go to bed, and Jeannette was left alone. But she sat still, thinking of Willie’s words, “ Jesus’ little boy ; ” that was what made him so different from many children she had seen. Then she prayed in low tones, so that only Jesus could hear her, that He would take her for His child and make her good and gentle.

Little children often say that they would like to be useful, but there is

nothing they can do; but every child can teach by example, and make others happy by speaking kind and gentle words, if it is only to say, "I am sorry," to any one who is in trouble.





VI.

Obedience.

“ **I** DECLARE! it is too bad that Will is not here yet; he promised to come directly after dinner, and here it is nearly three o’clock ; ” said Joe Whitmore, as he looked out of the window up the road for the twentieth time, to see if his cousin was coming.

“ Why do you not go without him ? ” said his mother. “ Something may prevent him from coming at all ; and it is a pity for you to lose this pleasant Saturday afternoon, — your only holiday.”

“There isn’t much fun in going blackberrying alone,” said Joe; “but then Will never cares how long he keeps a fellow waiting; so if you will tell him, mother, if he comes, that he will find me among the blackberry bushes on the other side of the little bridge, I’ll be off.”

He was just leaving the room, basket in hand, when his mother called to him to be sure and come back over the bridge, and not by the stepping-stones, and through the brambles. She did not tell him why, for fear of spoiling his afternoon’s pleasure. A woman who had sold her blackberries the day before, had told her of a large snake she had seen there among the thick bushes. She did not think there

was any danger on the other side of the stream, because the ground was more cleared.

Joe had been gone about fifteen minutes when Will made his appearance, loitering along the road. He said he had stopped to play ball with some boys he had met on the way.

After he had received the necessary directions, he went on and soon found his cousin.

Will had not brought any basket, for he said he could eat all the blackberries he could pick. He thought only of gratifying his own appetite, while Joe industriously tried to fill his basket, that he might share the fruit with his mother and sister at home. If he was pleased, Will did not care

whether others were or not; and so when the boys came to the bank of the stream by the stepping-stones, without waiting to ask Joe if he wished to go that way, he jumped from stone to stone until he reached the other side, and then called to him to follow.

But Joe hesitated. "Come along," said Will. "I wouldn't be such a baby as to be afraid; you have only to jump from stone to stone, and you are over. Besides, this is the nearest way to the road which leads toward home."

"I am not afraid to cross," said Joe; "you know that very well; but — but" — he continued, hesitating to give the true reason, "there are not so many berries over there."

“Nonsense!” said Will. “Yes, there are, and if you are not afraid, why, come along. Oh! perhaps you think your mother wouldn’t let you.”

“Well, wouldn’t that be reason enough?” said Joe.

“O, of course, for such a good boy as you, who always minds his mother!” replied Will, in the same mocking tone he had used before; “but perhaps you will change your mind if I tell you what she said to me when I called for you this afternoon.”

“What was it?” said Joe, eagerly.

“She said, ‘Tell Joe he may go with you anywhere in the woods,’” was Will’s reply.

“Did she really?” said Joe, joyfully; “then I’m with you in a minute.” And



he scrambled over the stones so quickly that he upset his basket, and the berries which he had gathered so carefully were all spilled into the stream.

His cousin never offered to help him at all ; but stood laughing at him as he picked up his dripping basket, and tried to dry it upon the grass. Joe did not want to spoil their afternoon's pleasure by a quarrel, so he repressed the angry words which had risen to his lips, though he did not feel much like joining in Will's merriment.

Joe was right about the berries ; there were not nearly as many as on the other side of the stream ; but there were plenty of briars, and it was not very easy to push his way through them. By the time he reached the road

which led to the house, Joe's jacket was torn in several places, and his hands badly scratched from holding the bushes back as they passed through. Will escaped more easily, for he had kept close behind Joe, walking in the path which he had made ; and the scarcity of berries did not trouble him, for he had eaten all he wished.

As Joe entered the gate and walked up to the house, he looked very different from the clean, happy boy who had left it about two hours before. “ Why, Joe ! ” said his little sister, as she peeped into the basket, “ how few berries ! Couldn't you find any more ? ”

“ Yes ; I had it nearly full when Will persuaded me to cross the stream, and my basket upset. I tried to fill it

again, but there were more brambles than berries on this side."

"But, my son," said his mother, who, coming down stairs just then, heard what he said, "did you forget that I told you to come back over the little bridge?"

"Why, no, mother; but Will said that you told him I might go anywhere in the woods with him."

"O no. I directed him how to find you, and said he would have no difficulty, because I had told you that you might pick berries anywhere in the woods, on that side of the stream; so you see he omitted part of my words. I knew you would find it uncomfortable in those thick bushes, besides giving me plenty of work for my needle."



And Mrs. Whitmore shook her head as she looked at the rents in Joe's jacket. She said nothing about her fears of snakes; for she was sure, if the boys had seen any, Joe would have told her.

"I'm very sorry, mother," said Joe; "but I thought Will told the truth, and now I see that he only cared for having his own way. He's a real selfish fellow."

"Well, never mind him now," said his mother. "Scolding at his faults will not mend your jacket; but, after this, remember that it is safe to follow the directions which are given you, without regard to what your companions may say about them."

The next day, after church in the afternoon, Joe's little sister May came

to hear the Bible story which her mother usually told her at that time. It was too dark for Joe to see to read his library-book any longer, so he took a seat by his mother to listen to the story too, much to May's delight, who said she was so glad that Joe was going to be a little boy again.

Their mother said she would tell them of one of the kings of Israel, who reigned after David and Solomon. He was a very wicked man; for he commanded the people to offer sacrifices to two golden calves which he had had made, instead of to the Lord God of Israel.

One day, just as he was preparing to offer a sacrifice to these idol-gods, a prophet came and stood by the altar

and gave him this message: “Thus saith the Lord: a king shall be raised up who will destroy all who worship these idols; and for a sign that this is true, this altar shall be rent, and the ashes scattered upon the ground.”

The king was very angry at the prophet, and stretched out his hand to lay hold on him and have him punished; but as he did so the Lord caused his hand to fall powerless at his side, and at the same moment the altar was rent, and the ashes were scattered. Then the king was frightened, and begged the prophet to ask the Lord to cure his hand, for now he saw that the Lord had sent him.

The prophet prayed to God for the king, and his hand was restored.

“Now,” said the king, “come home with me and rest, and I will give thee a reward.”

“No,” said the prophet. “I cannot; for the Lord commanded me not to eat bread or drink water in this place, or to return by the way which I came.”

So the prophet started to go home by a different way from the one by which he came.

Now, in the city where he had spoken to the king, there lived an old prophet, whose sons heard what had been said to the king, and came home and told their father. He was very anxious to see the prophet who had been sent from the Lord, and when he heard which way he had gone, he rode after him to bring him home.

He found the prophet resting under a tree by the side of the road, and he begged him to come home with him and eat bread.

But the prophet said, “No ; the Lord had commanded him not to eat bread or drink water in that city, or to return by the way which he had come.” Then the old prophet said : “An angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee, that he may eat bread and drink water ;” but he lied unto him.

The tired prophet, who was no doubt faint with hunger, did not wait to consider that if the Lord had intended to change his command he would have told him, but believed the old man, and returned to his house with him.

While they were eating at the table, the Lord really sent a message to the old prophet for his guest ; it was this : “ Thus saith the Lord ; because you have disobeyed my commandment in returning to this city to eat bread and to drink water, you shall not be buried in the sepulchre of your fathers.”

It was a great trial for an Israelite to be told that he must die away from his home and friends, and with a sorrowful heart the old prophet departed. He had not travelled far when a lion met him and killed him. His dead body lay by the side of the road, and there some men who were passing saw it, with the lion standing beside it. The animal never offered to attack the travellers, or to eat the body of the prophet ;

he stood still beside him, as if to show that he had been sent by the Lord to kill the prophet.

When the travellers reached the city, they told what they had seen; and when the old prophet heard it, he said, it is the disobedient prophet who came here with a message from the Lord; and again he rode out to bring him home. He found him, as the travellers had, lying dead by the side of the road, with the lion still beside him. The old man lifted the body of the prophet from the ground, and placing it on the ass upon which he had rode, returned a second time to the city; this time not to feast, but to mourn.

He buried the prophet in his own

tomb, and told his sons that when he died he wished to be placed beside him.

“ But, mamma,” said Mary, “ was he not very wicked to tell such a lie to the poor prophet, who thought all the time he was telling the truth ? ”

“ Yes, he was indeed ; but the poor prophet, as you call him, should not have heeded him, but obeyed exactly what the Lord had said to *him*, sure that if God had intended to alter His commands, He would have told him.”

“ Just as I ought to have remembered what you told me yesterday,” said Joe, “ and not minded what Will said.”

“ Yes, my boy ; and this is the lesson I want you to learn from your

own experience, and from this story: Always obey the commands which are given to you, whatever your companions may say. As you grow older and go away from your home, you may be told many times that what you have been taught to consider wrong is not so. For instance, you may be told that there is no harm in going out for your own pleasure on the Lord's day, — that it was meant for a day of rest; then think what the Lord says: 'Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it *holy*.' You will only be safe from sin by inquiring what the Lord says to *you*, and praying for His help to obey Him."



VII.

Dick and his Dog Bough.

HENRY JACKSON lived in a large city, where, though there are many poor people who suffer from cold and hunger, there are also many others to whom God has given the power as well as the desire to relieve these sufferings.

One evening in winter, Henry was hastening home, eager to tell his mother and sisters all about his day's work at the store where he had just entered as youngest clerk, when he

saw a boy much younger than himself, seated on the steps of a house, crying bitterly. It was very cold, and the boy's clothes were thin and ragged, and his feet were bare.

“ Hallo, youngster ! ” said Henry, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder as he spoke, “ what are you crying here for ? You had better go home, or you'll freeze to death.”

“ O my dog is lost ! my poor dog ! ” sobbed the boy ; “ and now I haven't any friend at all.”

“ Why,” said Henry, “ where's your father and mother ? ”

“ My father is dead, and my mother has gone away ; and now my dog has gone too.”

“ But don't you think you had better

go home now, and look for your dog to-morrow ? ” said Henry, who began to feel very cold, standing there with the wind whistling around him.

“ But I have no home,” said the boy.

“ Then where do you sleep at night ? ”

“ O, sometimes under steps to houses, sometimes in a barrel ; wherever I can find a place,” said the boy, who, comforted by Henry’s sympathy, had now ceased his crying ; “ but Rough, my dog, always slept close by me and kept me warm.”

“ Well,” said Henry, “ come home with me and you shall have some supper,” — for he knew that his mother was always ready to help the poor, —



“ and then you can tell me how you lost your dog. Perhaps I can help you find him.”

The boy willingly followed his kind friend, and in a few minutes they reached a small but comfortable house, which was Henry’s home. Mrs. Jackson received the poor boy very kindly, and took him to the kitchen to get some supper.

After she had returned to the dining-room, and they were seated at the tea-table, Henry told all he knew of Dick, which was the boy’s name. His little sister was very much shocked at the idea of any one having to sleep all night in the street. “ What are you going to do with him to-night, Henry ? ” she asked. “ I thought I

would take him to the boys' lodging-house, if mother approves," was his reply.

"That will do very well," said his mother, "if you are not too tired to walk so far. Cannot the boy find the way by himself?"

"He might not like to go alone," said Henry, "and I feel quite rested now."

When Henry went to the kitchen to see if Dick had finished his supper, the pleasant, grateful smile with which the boy greeted him was very much like one he had seen before. "Where have I seen you, Dick?" he asked.

"I used to sweep a crossing not far from here," he replied, delighted at being recognized, "and you always gave me a penny every time you passed."



Henry remembered him very well now; it was when he was going to school. “What made you give up the crossing?” he asked.

“The woman my mother left me with when she went away to look for work, set me to sweeping it; and when I did not bring home many pennies, she beat me so that I ran away from her, and then I had no home.”

“Then what did you do?” said Henry.

“The first night after I left her I slept under a coal-cart, and the next day I got a few pennies for carrying home a basket of potatoes for a woman. A few of the potatoes rolled out, and she said I might have them; so I stopped at a blacksmith’s shop,

and he let me roast them at his fire, and said I might sleep there. It was nice and warm there, but he turned me out after two or three nights. Then a boy let me sleep in a shutter-box belonging to the shop where he worked, after he had put up the shutters for the night."

"But why did you not try to get a place to work?"

"I did; but every one I asked said I was too ragged and dirty. But I used to get a chance to carry a basket, or do an errand, pretty often, so I most always had pennies enough to buy some bread or potatoes. I tried to save them, so I could buy a broom or a shovel, that I might earn something by clearing away the snow; but then I



used to get so hungry I had to buy something to eat."

"Will you go with me now to a house where poor boys who have no home can sleep?" said Henry. "And you can tell me the rest of your story as we walk along."

Dick hesitated; he didn't want to go to the poor-house, he said. "But this is a home provided by kind people for poor boys," said Henry; "and you needn't stay there after you see it, unless you wish to."

Henry had been so kind to him that Dick was willing to trust him, so they set off together, carrying a bundle of Henry's half-worn clothes, which Mrs. Jackson thought might do for some of the boys at the lodging-house, if they were too large for Dick.

“Please, do you think I shall ever find my dog?” said Dick, timidly, as they walked along.

“Perhaps so,” said Henry; “we’ll see. But tell me, how did you get a dog?”

“O, he was a poor fellow, running about the streets, with no one to care for him, and one day I gave him a crust; after that he always followed me, and I called him Rough. It was when I was sleeping in a shutter-box; and one night he made such a scratching that a policeman opened the door to see what it was; and when he saw me, he ordered me out or he would take me to the station-house; so I ran off as fast as I could, and Rough followed me. When I was too tired to



run any more, I lay down on a door-step and went to sleep. It was very cold, and snowing hard, but Rough laid close to me and kept licking my hands and face, or I should have frozen. Early in the morning a poor woman woke me up, and asked me why I didn't go home. When I told her I had no home, she was sorry for me, and gave me something to eat, and said I might sleep the next night in the corner of her room, which was in a cellar. It was a nice warm bed made of shavings, but I could not sleep, because Rough was outside, crying in the cold. She would not let me bring him in, so I would not sleep there another night; for I could not leave my dog, you know."

“How did you lose him at last?”
asked Henry.

“Why, last night I was very hungry, for I had not had any thing to eat all day, neither had Rough ; and I was standing by a baker’s shop, looking at the loaves of bread, and wishing I could buy one, when, all at once, Rough ran in and brought me a loaf in his mouth. A policeman saw him, and caught him and me before we could run away, and took us to the station-house, and kept us all night. I didn’t mind much, for it was warm and comfortable there. This morning he took me to the court, and told the judge that I was a bad boy, who kept a dog on purpose to steal for me. Then the judge said if I was ever brought



there again he would send me to prison, but that I might go this time. They did not let Rough follow me into the court-room ; and when I went out, I could not find him. Some boys said that they saw a policeman give him to a man to drown. I looked for him all over the street, but I could not find him ; and I'm afraid the boys were right. O my poor Rough ! ” And then Dick began to cry again.

“ Perhaps you will have another dog some day,” said Henry ; “ and I would not cry any more, for here we are at the lodging-house.”

Dick followed Henry up two or three flights of stairs into a large room, crowded with boys, some of them almost as ragged as Dick, though they

all had clean hands and faces. Some were reading, others were gathered together in groups talking to each other.

Henry led Dick to the superintendent, who was seated at a table near the door, and told him a little of his story. The room where the boys slept was next to the one where they were then, and, as it had only been recently opened to receive poor boys for the night, there was not a large number of beds, and at first the superintendent said there was not one unoccupied.

Dick looked very much disappointed at hearing this, for his misgivings about the place had all vanished as soon as he saw the boys so happy; but a little fellow who sat near heard what

the superintendent said. “O sir!” he exclaimed, “let him have my bed; I have had it for several nights, and I don’t mind sleeping on the floor.”

“How long is it since you have slept in a bed, my lad?” said the superintendent, addressing Dick.

“About three months, sir,” he replied; “and oh! if you will let me stay, I will sleep on the floor, or on the benches, or anywhere.”

“Very well,” said the superintendent, “then you can stay;” and Henry, much relieved at hearing this, left him, promising to come soon again and see him. He had a long and cold walk to his home; but he did not mind it, he was so happy that he had been the means of saving a poor boy

from spending another night in the street.

He would have been happier still if he could have understood just how comfortable Dick was after he had had a nice bath, and had lain down in the comfortable bed, which the boy who had offered it had insisted upon giving him. But only one who had known what it was to sleep night after night on cold stones, or at best on straw in barrels, with no change of clothing, could quite understand Dick's delight.

The next morning Henry told the gentleman in whose store he was employed about Dick, and interested him so much that he persuaded a friend to take him as errand-boy in his store,



and Henry's fellow-clerks subscribed money to buy Dick a suit of clothes.

He received wages enough to pay for a bed in the lodging-house for boys which had been established for some time in the city, and which was different from the temporary refuge where he had been at first received. Every evening a gentleman came to teach the boys, so that Dick learned after a while to read and write. Henry also persuaded him to go to Sunday school with him and to church.

This poor boy, who had never known before what it was to have a friend, listened with great delight to the story of the Saviour's love. He saw at once that Jesus, who was ready to listen to the prayer of the poorest

and most sinful, was just the Friend he wanted, and he gave Him his whole heart. He learned to pray to Jesus for every thing.

One evening he found a boy at the lodging-house, to whom he had become much attached, feeling discouraged because he had been for some time unable to find work. "Perhaps you have not asked the right one to give it to you," said Dick. "Don't you remember the verse we read last Sunday evening, 'Ask and ye shall receive,' and how the gentleman told us to ask Jesus for every thing?" The boy's face brightened at once as he said, "I'll ask Him." "And so will I," said Dick.

The next day the boy came running

up to Dick as he was going out of the store to deliver a parcel, and told him that a gentleman had just engaged him to go into the country and work on his farm. "And, Dick," he added, "isn't God good to answer a poor fellow's prayer?"

It was love for Jesus, and a desire to follow His example who went about doing good, which had led Henry Jackson to take an interest in Dick, and to try to do all he could for him; so it made him very happy to know that Dick had thus learned to love and trust the same heavenly Friend.

Dick's greatest trouble now was, that he had never heard from his mother since she left him. He prayed very often that he might hear from

her, and that she might show some love and care for him.

One day he told Henry how anxious he was about it. "Keep on praying," said Henry, "and if God sees best, He will give you your desire." Not long after this, when Henry started to go down town one morning, he met Dick waiting for him. He ran up to him, and exclaimed, joyfully, "I've got an answer! I've got an answer!" and then he went on to explain that the evening before he had received a parcel; on opening it, he found it was from his mother. It contained some shirts, a small sum of money, and a letter.

She wrote that she had only lately found out where he was; that she



would not have left him if she had not thought the woman would be kind to him. She was then living as cook in a distant town, but hoped soon to send for him to come and see her.

Oh, how happy Dick was, now that he knew that his mother still cared for him ! Soon he heard from her again ; the gentleman in whose family she lived came to the city, and, on inquiring about Dick of his employer, received such good accounts of him that he offered to take him home with him and give him a place in his store.

Dick accepted the offer with great delight, for then he should be near his mother. But he was very sorry to leave Henry. As he bade him good-by, he said, "I can never thank you

enough for all you have done for me. What would have become of me if you had not spoken to me that night as I sat on the steps?"

When Henry told his mother that evening of Dick's parting words, she said, "The Lord sent you to him;" and she added in a low tone, "Then shall the King say, I was a stranger and ye took me in. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."





VIII.

Nelly and her Dolls.

NELLY BAKER was getting her dolls ready to go to a party at her Cousin Hattie's.

It was Hattie's birthday, but the party was for one of her dolls which had been given to her the year before on that day, so it was her birthday too, Hattie said.

Nelly was very anxious that her dolls should look as well as possible. Two of them had been dressed in Paris, so she had only to smooth out their sashes

and tie them in fresh bows, and they were all ready. But her darling May, her baby who was now asleep in her cradle, had several suits of beautiful clothes, and she must be dressed with the greatest care. After Nelly had chosen what she considered the handsomest dress, she found that May's hat would be improved by a little new trimming; so she went to look among her treasures for a piece of ribbon, but she could not find any that she thought nice enough.

“ Oh, if sister Emma were only at home,” she said to herself, “ perhaps she would give me a piece of ribbon, as she has so many pretty pieces in that box in her closet; and mamma is gone, too! O dear! what shall I do?”

Then she thought she would just look in Emma's box and see if there was any ribbon there that would do. Yes, there was a lovely pink, which would be so becoming to May!

Nelly knew that it was not at all certain that Emma would give it to her, even if she were at home ; for she was saving all her pieces of ribbon and silk to use in working for a fair which was to take place soon. But Nelly did not want to think of this ; the ribbon suited her, and she took it. Ah, little ones ! Nelly is not the only one whom the desire for finery has led into sin.

She went to the sitting-room, where she had left her dolls, and, with her scissors in her hand, she was about to cut the ribbon, when something made

her stop. Was it the loud ticking of the clock that she heard? It seemed to say, “Put it back, put it back;” “You’re a thief, you’re a thief.”

The clock had been ticking all the morning; why had she not noticed it before? Because, now she had been doing wrong, her conscience was troubled, and so the clock seemed to speak to her. She tried not to listen to it, and to say to herself, “Emma won’t care;” but it was of no use—the clock would go on ticking, saying the same words over and over again; the little scissors would not cut, and Nelly could not feel happy. Then she did the best thing she could. She went and put back the ribbon in the place from which she had taken it, and knelt



down in her own little room and asked God to forgive her.

After that, her heart was light again, and she was ready to dress her baby May in the clean white clothes and embroidered frock which were spread out on the chair beside her cradle. She had her dinner alone, for her mamma and sister had gone away to spend the day, and as soon after as possible, she started for her Cousin Hattie's with her three dolls.

She gave a little sigh as she put on baby May's hat without the fresh ribbon she had wanted for it ; but the baby smiled as usual, and looked just as happy as if she had ten yards of new ribbon on her hat, and Nelly soon forgot all about it, as she could not have

done if she had kept her sister's ribbon ; for then the uncomfortable feeling that she had been doing wrong would have made her unhappy all the time.

Hattie was delighted to see her, and admired the dolls as she led her to the summer-house in the garden, where the tea-party was to be held.

The little tea-things were all ready to set out on the little table, and the children had a very happy time in arranging them. There were eight dolls in all: Nelly's three, and two of Hattie's beside the one who had the party, and two belonging to Hattie's little sister Maggie, who was much delighted in being allowed to help in setting the table.



They had a very merry time, teaching the dolls how to behave, feeding them, and eating all that they left. Then, when the feast was over, they all went to swing, and played under the trees, until their own tea-time came.

When Nelly reached home, she found her mamma there to welcome her, and to hear all about the happy time she had at cousin Hattie's.





IX.

The Selfish Boy.

A HAPPY party of children were on their way one frosty afternoon to a sugar-maple grove, where their fathers and brothers were making sugar from the sap which they had collected from the trees.

“Perhaps they’ll let us have some sap to boil for ourselves,” said one.

“Oh, I hope they will!” said another, “and we can take it down by the side of the brook and make a fire; then, while it is boiling, we can slide.”

They all agreed that this was a splendid plan, and were merrier than ever over the thought of the nice time they would have. The sugar-makers at the grove were very willing to please the children, so they not only gave them some sap, but lent them an iron pot to boil it in.

It did not take long to make a fire by the brook, which was near the grove, and the sap was put on to boil.

There was only one drawback to the pleasure of the party, and that was the selfishness of one of their number. His name was Johnny Wells. He would not help to gather the sticks for the fire, nor carry the kettle, nor stir the sap. While the rest were at work, he amused himself by sliding on the brook,

which was frozen hard. He seemed to like this very well, until his little sister came to him and asked him to hold her hand while she tried to slide. Then he said it was too cold, and he was tired ; so he left the ice, and, wrapping his coat closely about him, went and stood by the side of the brook with his hands in his pockets.

How different from Fred Niles ! He took his little sister on the ice and held her hand while she had some famous slides. He was not cold ; for he had love and kindness in his heart, and that warmed him all over.

An old man, who lived in a little house on the road to the grove,— Uncle Ben the children called him,— crossed the bridge with a load of sticks



while the children were by the brook. As soon as he saw Johnny shivering there, he understood what the matter was. He called out to him to run about and help the other children. "It's your selfishness makes you cold," said he. And I think Uncle Ben was right; don't you?

The rest of the party were determined not to feel cold from the same cause; for as soon as the sap was boiled enough, and they had spread it on the snow to cool, they gave Johnny Wells as much as any of them had, though he had not helped them at all.





X.

Give the Poor Boy a Light.



IT was a very stormy, windy night, and the boys at Farmer Haywood's were glad to gather around the blazing wood fire in the kitchen, where the crackling and roaring of the burning hickory logs formed a pleasant contrast to the whistling of the wind and the dashing of the rain against the windows.

The farmer was seated on one side of the fire-place, by a small table which held a candle, by the light of



which he read his weekly newspaper, while his wife, industriously knitting, listened to such items of intelligence as he read aloud to her, when the loud talking of the boys permitted his voice to be heard. They had some excuse for being noisy on this night, and their parents did not check them; for their cousin Robert had just arrived from the city to make them a short visit, and they had a great deal to tell each other. A bag of chestnuts had been kept especially for this occasion, and they were roasting them in the ashes in company with some fall pippins.

The reading and talking were suddenly interrupted by a knock at the door.

“Who can that be?” said one of the boys.

“Some beggar, very likely,” said another.

“I hope he will not ask to stay all night,” said a third, who did not want to have their merry party spoiled by the addition of a stranger.

“Whoever it is, he must not be kept standing in the rain,” said the farmer, as he rose to open the door. Every one listened to hear who was there.

“Please, sir, give me a light,” sounded a childish voice from out of the darkness.

“Come in, come in,” said the farmer; “for I can’t see who you are, or where you are standing.”

In an instant a boy about eleven years of age stepped inside the door



and followed Mr. Haywood into the kitchen. In his hand he held a lantern, but there was no light in it.

“Come to the fire, my boy,” said Mrs. Haywood ; “your clothes must be very wet.”

“Thank you, ma’am,” he replied ; “but I cannot stop, for mother will be anxious. I was kept later than usual at my work ; and as I was hurrying along, the wind blew my light out. I should not have troubled you, but I was afraid, if I tried to go on in the dark, I might walk off into the mill-race by the side of the road beyond.”

“I am glad that you called,” said the farmer, as he handed him his lantern with the lamp brightly burning. “I have fastened the door of the lan-

tern so that the wind cannot blow it open again."

With many thanks the boy went on his way, and Mr. Haywood returned to his paper.

"That was a little fellow to be out alone in such a storm," said he; "do you know him, wife?"

"I think he is widow Lester's son," said Mrs. Haywood; "and I have seen him at work for the shoemaker in the village."

"Has he far to go?" asked Cousin Robert.

"No, only about a quarter of a mile; but it is a bad part of the road, and I am glad that he has a light. The village from which he came is about half a mile."



“Boys,” said Mr. Haywood, laying down his paper, “I want to tell you what this has made me think of.”

In an instant the boys were all attention, expecting one of father’s stories. But this time it was only one of his talks, which they liked almost as well.

“There are a great many poor boys,” said he, “who need a light even more than young Lester did. He feared that he could not find his way to his earthly home without one; but they know nothing of the light which will guide them to their heavenly home. Do you understand what I mean, boys?”

“Yes, father,” said George, the eldest, “you mean they know nothing

of Jesus, who is the light of the world."

"Or of the Bible, which is the light to teach them of Him. James Lester knew he was in darkness, and asked for a light; but those who are in darkness because they are in ignorance do not always know their need of light, and so we must not wait for them to ask us for light, but send or give it to them."

"I think the boys whom I see playing in the street sometimes on my way to Sunday school must need a light," said Cousin Robert.

"Yes," said his uncle, "and if you could persuade them to go with you to Sunday school, that would be one way to give them light."



“I mean to try when I go home,” said Robert.

“But what can we do, father?” said another of the boys. “Almost every one goes to Sunday school and church about here.”

“You can see if there are any who do not,” said his father, “and persuade them; and you can earn and save money to send Bibles and missionaries to other places to teach the ignorant of the way to heaven.”

“But,” said their mother, “what would you have thought of James Lester, if we had seen him walking without a light, and, when we offered it to him, he had refused to take it?”

“Why, that he was a foolish fellow, of course,” said another boy.

“Then, my dear boys, be sure that you are not as foolish,” continued their mother. “You have the light; let it guide you. Study your Bibles, that you may learn more and more of Jesus; follow Him, and he will lead you to the home He has provided.”





XI.

Kind Tom Matthews.

“O DEAR, dear! how cold it is!” said Mary Graham, as she lay in bed one morning, trying to get courage enough to rise. It was just light enough for her to see that the panes of glass in the one small window which the room contained were covered with frost; she remembered to have heard the snow pelting against it in the night, though she did not hear it now.

“I wish some kind fairy would

come and make the fire for me, and then go to the spring for water," she thought. And then she glanced at the pale face of her mother, who was sleeping by her side, and remembered how many cold mornings she had risen and made the fire and prepared the breakfast for her, and never wakened her until every thing was ready.

Ah! love was the kind fairy which had led her mother to do all this for her; and now love would lead Mary to do the same for her mother, who was sick and wearied with labor. So, hesitating no longer about braving the cold, Mary crept softly from the bed, and hastened to dress, determined to have every thing provided for her mother's comfort before she awoke.



She quietly closed the door after her as she went into the adjoining room, which served them for kitchen as well as sitting-room, and when she had kindled a fire in the stove with the wood which she had placed there the night before, she threw a shawl over her head, took two large stone jugs, and started to fill them at the spring.

Tom Matthews, who lived very near Mary, had awakened about the same time; but his first thought when he saw the frosty window-panes and remembered about the snow, was, “Oh, what a jolly cold morning! won’t there be fun though, skating and snowballing?”

He did not care if his fingers were so numb that he could hardly button

his jacket ; he thought only of hurrying, that he might have time before breakfast to run to the pond, to find out if the ice were thick enough for skating.

The savory smell of the nice breakfast that was being cooked came from the kitchen as he came down stairs ; but he rushed from the house, calling to his mother that he would be back in a few minutes.

He had not taken many steps when he met Mary Graham, on her way to the spring with her two stone jugs.

“ Hallo, little one ! ” said he, “ you look half frozen. Don’t you like the cold weather ? Here, let me take your load.” And he lifted the heavy jugs as if they were feathers, and



strode along before her to the spring.

Mary smiled at the idea of being called “little one” by Tom, who was no taller than herself, though she could not help acknowledging that he was very much stronger; for he did not seem to mind carrying the pitchers, which had already made her arms ache.

She did not say any thing, though, for she felt too cold to talk; besides she was a little shy of Tom, for she had seen him pass her mother’s house so often running and shouting, that she thought him a very rough boy. She did not know that, although he was fond of play and of making a noise, he had learned from his gentle,

loving mother to be kind and tender to all those weaker than himself, and that all the while he was walking with her he was pitying her, because she looked so cold and delicate, and was wondering what more he could do to help her. Before he could make up his mind, they had reached the spring, and he proceeded to fill her pitchers.

This spring, which was a great blessing to the neighborhood, had its home far off among the hills; the water came trickling along underground, until it found an outlet through a bank on Farmer Matthews' land. Finding what good water it was, and that it never failed, he had laid pipes underground for it to run through, and had built a stone wall against the bank,

and then a spout had been inserted, and now all day and night long through winter and summer, the water ran freely for all who chose to come for it. Tom was just filling Mary's second jug when two other girls came for water. One was a strong, hearty lass, who worked for one of the farmers in the neighborhood. She seemed to enjoy the cold weather as much as Tom did, and laughed when he offered to fill her pails for her.

“No, no!” said she. “I am strong enough to do it for myself; but I'll wait, if you like, while you fill Hattie Lee's pail, for she looks half frozen, as well as Mary.”

So Hattie's pail was filled, and Mary insisted upon helping her carry it; for

they passed her house on the way home, and Tom would not let her touch one of her pitchers. They were rather heavier now they were filled with water. “I wonder why she don’t take a pail to the spring,” he thought; “it would be so much handier.”

Mary might have told him that the only pail her mother owned had fallen to pieces this frosty weather, and no money could be spared to buy another. He said nothing, however, of what was passing in his mind, but deposited the pitchers at Mrs. Graham’s door, and ran home with Mary’s softly-spoken “Thank you, Tom,” sounding pleasantly in his ears all the way.

There was no time to visit the pond this morning, for the family were all at



the breakfast-table when he came in. His mother smilingly shook her head as he took his seat.

“I thought how it would be,” she said; “first one slide and then another, until you forgot how the time passed.”

“Mother, I have not been near the pond this morning!” exclaimed Tom, eager to defend himself. And then he told, in as few words as possible, what had kept him.

When he saw his mother’s eyes glisten with pleasure as she smiled her approval, Tom felt quite repaid for his small sacrifice. He felt very much relieved that she only said, “I am very glad that you were able to be kind to Mary; I must see what can be done for Mrs. Graham;” for he disliked to

have a fuss made about what he did.

Mrs. Matthews was not contented with merely wishing to do good ; her acts were sure to follow her resolutions. So Mary and her mother were hardly seated at their frugal breakfast of tea and toast, which it had taken some time to prepare after Mary's return, when Tom again made his appearance at the door. Mary answered his knock, and he handed her a basket, saying, "Mother thought you might like this ;" and ran off before she could thank him.

The hot cakes and nicely cooked meat which the basket contained, were a great treat, and the kind thoughtfulness which had sent it caused a



warm glow in Mrs. Graham's heart which remained there all day.

The next morning Mrs. Matthews came to see her. She knew that Mrs. Graham would be the better for a little change, she said, and she wanted her and Mary to come and stay with her a few weeks. She would take no refusal. So Mary and her mother went to the farm-house the next day, and Mrs. Graham was so much benefited by the kind nursing and nourishing food which she received there, that when she returned to her home she was quite restored to health, and able to work once more at her trade of dressmaking.

Thus Tom and his mother obeyed the Scripture precept: "As we have

opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially unto such as are of the household of faith."

Tom might have carelessly passed by Mary on her way to the spring, and thus lost his opportunity of helping her, and bringing gladness to his own heart by the consciousness of having done a kind act.

If Mrs. Matthews had been satisfied with merely feeling sorry for Mrs. Graham and wishing to be kind to her, instead of giving her the rest and refreshment of a visit to her plentiful and well-ordered home, she would have missed the opportunity of doing good to one of Christ's suffering ones, a member with herself of the household of faith.



XII.

The Stolen Pleasure.

“DING-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling ! ” sound-
ed the bell, just as Ella Hughes
had turned her head upon her pillow
for another morning nap.

“ O dear ! ” she said to herself ; “ now
I suppose I must get up, or I shall be
late for breakfast and for school. It
seems to me that I never was so sleepy
before.” As she opened her eyes, they
rested upon the cause of her unusual
sleepiness ; there it was upon a table
near her, — a book with a brown cover,

which looked as if it had passed through a great many hands. One of her schoolmates had lent it to her, and she had found the story it contained so interesting that she had sat up to read it the night before, long after every one else was in bed. She thought how nice it would be if she were only as rich and beautiful as the heroine of the story ; and after being up late at night, could remain in bed as long as she liked, and have her breakfast brought to her there if she wished. She hoped that she could when she was grown up ; she wished she was a lady now ; she was tired of being a little girl and having to go to school, and to do as she was told ; she wished she could have her own way.

She became so much interested in these foolish thoughts that she forgot that the bell had rung to warn her that it was time to get up, until she heard her brothers pass her door on their way to the dinning-room. Then she knew that she had no time to lose; so she sprang up hastily, hid the book in her closet under a pile of clothes, and commenced to dress as fast as possible. She knew that it was not a book of which her mother would approve, so she took that means of hiding it from her; but she felt ill at ease, and when the breakfast-bell rang some time before she was dressed, she felt too cross to wish to see any one. The teasing remarks of her brothers at her laziness as she entered the dining-room did not

improve her temper, and the grave looks of her father, showing that he was displeased at her tardiness, made her feel very unhappy.

She had a long walk to school, so she had to start as soon as she had finished breakfast, and had no time to look over her lessons. She had hurried through them so the day before, in order to have time to read her borrowed book, that she was by no means sure that she knew them. She felt restless and dissatisfied ; and as the recitations followed each other in quick succession, and she failed in every one, she was extremely mortified, for she had always prided herself upon being one of the best scholars in school.

When school was over, she hastened



home, hoping to forget all that had been disagreeable in reading the story which had charmed her so much. She had left it the night before in a most exciting place, and she was so anxious to know how all the people got out of their troubles, that she determined to wait until evening to study her lessons, and spend the afternoon in reading. When she entered the house, she was told that her mother had gone out, and her brothers had not come in from play ; so she had no one to interfere with her.

She took the book from her closet, and as it was a warm and pleasant day early in summer, she went to a retired corner of a grove near the house, where she thought no one could find

her. Her efforts at concealment were evidence that she felt she was doing wrong ; but she quieted her conscience by saying that she was not disobeying any positive commands ; for her mother had never forbidden her to read the book, because she never had seen it.

Ella seated herself on the ground in the shade, and was soon so absorbed in the story that she did not even notice her pet rabbit, who, free to run where he chose, had followed her to her hiding-place, to be fed from her hand as usual.

She had almost finished the book, when she was startled by hearing her name called, and looking up, there stood her mother close beside her !

“ Why, Ella, my child ! I did not know



you were here. I came home just after your school was out, with your uncle Charles, whom I had met as he was coming to invite us to take a drive with him. Maria said you had gone out again after you had left your school-books in the house ; but I thought it was so unlike you to go out and not leave any message for me, that I could not believe it ; so I sent her to look for you, and called you everywhere ; and then, as you did not make your appearance, I had to go without you. I was very sorry, for we drove to the beach, and it was lovely there."

Ella was terribly disappointed, for it was seldom that her uncle had time to take her to drive ; she wished that she had never seen the book.

“Then when I came home again,” continued her mother, “and Maria said she had not seen you yet, I was sure you must be somewhere about the place, and so I came to look for you, and here I have found you at last. You must have a very difficult lesson to take you so long to learn. Let me see it.”

Ella knew it was useless to try any further concealment, so she rose and handed the book to her mother, who looked at it as they walked toward the house together. Her face became very grave as she read the title.

“Why, Ella! where did you get this?” she asked; “and how long have you had it?”

“Mary Starr lent it to me yester-



day," said Ella, speaking in a very low tone.

"And it was for this silly trash that you have lost a pleasant ride, displeased your father by being late this morning, and disregarded your mother's wishes?" said Mrs. Hughes; "and your lessons, — what has become of them?"

Ella burst into tears at the remembrance of her disappointment and mortification. "I wish I had never seen the book," said she, as soon as her sobs would allow her to speak. "It has only caused me trouble; why did Mary Starr lend it to me?"

"But you need not have taken it," said her mother, seating herself on the piazza, and putting her arm around the sobbing child.

“I did not ask her for it,” said Ella. “She offered it, and I did not like to refuse, just when I had said, too, that I liked to read story-books.”

“If you had shown the book to me, my child,” replied Mrs. Hughes, “as I have so often told you to do before reading any thing, I would have told you that it was a silly novel, not fit for you to read, and you could have returned it; but I fear that you have concealed it from me purposely, fearing that I would take it from you. Go to your room now and think quietly about it, and this evening you can tell me if you wish to finish reading it.”

Ella obeyed, for she really desired to follow her mother’s wishes always, though her resolutions were often

broken because she made them in her own strength, without asking God's help in keeping them. As she sat by the window in her room, and thought over the mortifications and disappointments of the day, she made up her mind that she had paid very dearly for the small pleasure of reading, and that another time she would trust her mother, who always knew best.

The calm, pleasant face Ella presented at the tea-table was very different from the cross, dissatisfied expression which she had worn in the morning; and after tea she begged her mother to keep the book which had caused her so much unhappiness, until she was going to school the next day,

that she might not be tempted to read any more before returning it to the owner. She studied so diligently that evening that she learned all her lessons before her usual bed-time. When she kissed her mother for good-night, she whispered, "I always mean to do as you wish after this."

"With God's help," added her mother, as she returned her loving embrace.





XIII.

Peter's Visit to the Sick Boy.

“HALLO, Peter! are you going skating this afternoon?” called one of the boys to Peter Temple, as he was hurrying away from the school-house one winter’s afternoon; “the ice is splendid now.”

“To be sure I am,” said Peter; “I wouldn’t miss it for any thing; but I’m going home after my skates.”

“Well, hurry up, then,” said his companion, “and I’ll wait for you at the corner.”

“ O no ! don’t wait,” said Peter ;
“ I’ll come down to the pond as soon
as I can.”

Peter hastened down the lane which led to his home, rushed into the dining-room to leave his books, and was going out with the same speed to the wood-shed where his skates were kept, when he saw a nice piece of mince pie standing on the stove.

“ Ah ! mother has put that there to keep warm for me, I know,” said he ;
“ it’s lucky I told Bob not to wait for me, for now I can stay long enough to eat it.” So he helped himself to a knife and fork from the closet, and took his seat by the fire to enjoy his pie. He had not quite eaten it all, when his mother came in.

“ Ah, my boy ! ” said she, “ I am glad to see you at home in such good time, for I want you to do an errand for me.”

“ O mother ! ” said Peter, imploringly ; “ I was just going skating, and the ice is so splendid ; won’t to-morrow morning do as well ? ”

“ I will tell you what I want you to do,” said his mother, “ and then you can judge for yourself. Little Jenny Timson told me yesterday at Sunday school that her brother Sam, who has been ill a long time, was much worse, and could scarce eat any thing at all. When I asked her how he liked the jelly which I had sent him some time ago, she said he had not had any thing since that he liked as well, and that he

had been wishing for more only that very morning ; so I told her that I would send some as soon as possible. I have been busy all the morning making it, in the hope that you would take it to him this afternoon. Jerry has had to go to the mill, and your father is in the city, so there is no one else to go with it. Still, if you feel as if you could not give up your skating, the jelly can wait, though I know that Sam would be very glad to have it this afternoon."

Peter stood silent and irresolute. He wanted to oblige his mother, who was so kind to care for his comfort ; but then how could he miss the skating ? and there had been so little of it this winter. His mother watched him

anxiously for a few moments, and then said:—

“ Do you remember, my son, who it was who said, ‘ I was sick, and ye visited me ; ’ and ‘ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me ? ’ ”

“ Why, mother ! ” exclaimed Peter, in surprise ; “ I thought that meant to go and read the Bible to sick people, and pray with them ; not such a little thing as to carry jelly to them.”

“ The text does not say so,” said his mother ; “ the words are merely, ‘ I was sick, and ye visited me.’ I think the dear Saviour accepts as an offering to Himself the smallest favor done to any one who is sick, if we do it for his sake ; and you know the promise.”

“ Motner, I'll go,” said Peter, decidedly ; “ the ice will keep until to-morrow, I guess. Where is the jelly ? ” And he seemed in as great a haste to put on his overcoat and be off, as he had been to get his skates only a short time before.

“ Here is the jelly,” said his mother, “ all packed nicely in a basket ; but it is more than two miles to Mrs. Timson's, and you had better go on Ned ; then, perhaps, you will be back in time to skate a little while.”

“ I do not care now whether I am or not. I would rather take the jelly, but I am glad I can ride Ned.” And Peter ran to the stable to saddle the horse. This was soon done, and then coming to the door, he took the basket



from his mother, and promising to carry it very carefully, started on his errand of mercy.

He felt very happy as he rode along, because he had, at the last, complied cheerfully with his mother's request. It would have been different if he had gone unwillingly. Then the words which his mother had quoted were still in his mind. He knew the verses very well, for he had learned them to say to his Sunday-school teacher only a few weeks before, and he said over to himself the promise to which his mother had referred: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It seemed such a little thing to be called blessed for, —

just taking some jelly to a poor sick boy, and yet his mother had said it was just such small services the Saviour meant.

He was so glad that he was able to do it, it made him happier than all the skating in the world could have done. Mrs. Timson came to the door herself, as he rode up. "Yes; I knew your mother would send it," she said, as he told her what he had brought. "If there ever was a woman who seemed to love to be doing for other folks she's one. She is always sending something. Now here's a plate that she sent a nice pie on for Sam last week. I haven't had a chance to send it home before, so maybe you can take it back in your basket.

Can't you come in while I unpack the jelly? It will brighten Sam up wonderfully to see you."

Peter had a boy's natural shrinking from the sight of suffering in any form; and perhaps at any other time he might have made some excuse; but now he had learned that visiting the sick was a higher, nobler work than he had ever thought it before, so he could not refuse Mrs. Timson's invitation. He tied his horse to the fence near the door, and followed little Jenny, who had been standing by her mother's side by the door, as she led the way to Sam's room. He was seated in an easy-chair, looking very pale and thin, but peaceful and contented, as if he knew that Jesus loved him.

He was a little older than Peter, but he had gone to the same school before he had been taken sick, and now he was anxious to hear all about the boys and the teacher. As Peter told him of the various things which had happened since he had been there, he was so much interested and so animated that Peter could hardly realize that he had been for many weeks shut up in that one room, and might not leave it again until Jesus called him home.

When Peter saw how much Sam seemed to enjoy the nice cold jelly,—for his mother had given him some as soon as she had taken it from the basket,—he wondered how he could have hesitated about bringing it to him; and though it was quite dark



when he reached home, and so too late for any skating, he did not regret having spent his afternoon in visiting the sick.





XIV.

Aunt Sally's Wood-Pile.

ONE afternoon, early in December, Roger Harris and his brother Joe returned from school by a short cut through the woods. They often went that way in summer, for it was so much cooler and pleasanter under the shade of the grand old trees than in the dusty road ; but they did not choose it very often in winter, the trees looked so bare and desolate, stripped of their eaves, and the wind sounded so mournfully as it whistled through the



branches. They did not notice it much this afternoon, for they were in haste to be at home in time to learn their lessons before tea; their mother had promised them a candy frolic that evening, and they had invited some of the boys of the neighborhood to join them. They thought it great fun after the molasses was boiled just right, and cool enough to handle, to pull and pull the mixture until it was almost white.

As the boys hurried along, the dry leaves crackling under their feet as they walked, — “the only pleasant thing about the woods in winter,” Roger said, — they passed near a clearing on which was built a small house, where an old woman lived whom every body called Aunt Sally. Her son had

bought the land and built the house for himself and mother, and they were very comfortable there as long as he lived ; for he earned enough to supply all their wants by working for the farmers in the hayfields in summer, and chopping wood in winter. It was a very sad day for his mother when he was brought home dead, killed by the falling of a tree ; sad, for she not only lost his love and care, but she often after that found it hard to get food enough to eat, and fuel to keep her warm ; for she was too old to do much work. Yet, she said, the Lord had never left her to suffer want ; but had always sent her aid when she was most in need, in answer to her earnest prayer.

She was right in thinking that the



loving Father, who feedeth the fowls of the air, would care for her, though she was such a poor old woman. No doubt he directed the steps of these boys to this path, near her cottage, that they might be reminded that there was one of His creatures for whose wants they might provide. She was picking up the dead branches of the trees which the wind had scattered on the ground when they saw her.

“Why, Aunt Sally,” said Roger, “this is too cold a day for you to be out.”

“Yes, it is very cold,” was her reply; “but it is colder sitting in the house without a fire, and as my wood is all burned up, I have come out to see what I can find to burn under the trees.”

“Let us help you, then,” said Joe.

The brothers threw down their books, filled their arms with sticks, and carried them off to Aunt Sally’s wood-shed. This they did several times, and then, gathering up their books again, they hurried off toward home without waiting for Aunt Sally’s thanks.

They had not gained much in time by taking the short cut through the woods, and they would have to study very hard to be able to learn their lessons before evening; but they had gained light, happy hearts, which always belong to those who do kind deeds of mercy.

“It is too bad,” said Roger, as they

walked toward home, “that no one has sent Aunt Sally a load of wood yet. There’s Uncle Silas; he has enough cut and piled in his woods, ready for hauling, to keep a dozen families warm this winter; and he might send her some.”

“Yes,” said Joe, “he might,” in a tone which implied that Uncle Silas was not likely to do any thing of the kind. Though he had one of the largest and best farms in the neighborhood, nothing that it produced ever went into any other house or barn than his own, except he received its full value in some other commodity or in money.

“I mean to ask him, any way,” said Roger.

“ You’d better not,” said Joe ; “ he may be angry.”

“ I don’t care if he is,” replied his brother. “ I will do it the first chance I get.”

The chance came sooner than he expected. That very evening, while the boys were in the midst of their fun, just as the candy was ready to be pulled, who should come in but Uncle Silas. He enjoyed a frolic as well as any boy, and he was soon one of the gayest of the party. Roger, who had not forgotten his resolution, thought this a good time to make his request ; and Joe quite accidentally gave him the opportunity, by proposing that they should take some candy to Aunt Sally the next morning.



“Nonsense!” said Uncle Silas, who overheard him; “what would such an old woman care for candy?”

“No,” said Roger, “I am sure she would rather have a load of wood. Only think, Uncle Silas! we saw her this bitter cold afternoon picking up what brush-wood she could find about on the ground. Joe and I helped her, so that she has now enough to last through this evening; but her wood-shed is empty, and you know that brush-wood does not give much heat.”

“Well, let her go to the county poor-house, then,” said Uncle Silas; “there’s fire enough; and I think she would be much more comfortable there.”

“O Uncle Silas!” said Roger; “she

would not like to leave that nice house her son built for her ; besides, she's too respectable to go to the poor-house. You have so much wood piled up in your woods, I think you might give her a load."

" You do, do you ! " said Uncle Silas, astonished at the boy's audacity. " Well, I don't see why I should give her a load of wood any more than any one else. I guess if you had to work as I do, you would not talk so much about giving away what you had earned. But come, now, I'll make you an offer. Yesterday, when I was at Delville, Squire Reed's lady asked me to get some Christmas greens to dress the church and Sunday school-room there. She said she would pay



for them liberally. I didn't say whether I would or wouldn't; but I've been thinking since that she would not probably give enough to make it worth while for me to hire the trees cut and cart them so far. But if you have a mind to cut them, and gather what vines you can find under the leaves, you may fill my spring-cart from my woods, and I guess Mrs. Reed, or some of the church folks, will give you enough money to pay for a good pile of wood for Aunt Sally; only you'll have to take your donkey, Ned, to draw the cart, for I can't spare any of my horses."

Roger and Joe were delighted with this offer, and thought it uncommonly

generous for Uncle Silas ; they did not know what some of the older people present knew, that it would be a real gain to Uncle Silas to have some of the undergrowth of hemlock, spruce, and pine cleared out of his woods.

It was then two weeks before Christmas, and the boys did not want to cut down the trees immediately, lest they might wither ; but they went through the woods, marking those they thought best suited to their purpose. They spent several afternoons in this way, studying in the evenings. When they began to cut down the trees, they found that they could not get through in time unless they worked in the morning too ; so they were up long

before daylight, and the stars were still shining brightly when, after they had eaten their breakfast, they started for the woods.

It was pretty severe work on these wintry mornings, and not even the mittens which their mother had knit for them could keep their fingers from aching with the cold ; but they did not mind that when they thought how comfortable Aunt Sally was with the wood which they had provided for her ; for Uncle Silas, seeing how much in earnest they were, yielded to Roger's coaxing, and let them have the wood at once, to be paid for when they received the money for their Christmas greens, and several of the boys had helped them cut it, so that Aunt Sally had now a nice pile in her shed.

By the Saturday before Christmas they had enough greens to fill the spring cart, and they took them to Delville, which was a town about six miles distant. Mrs. Reed was much pleased with them, and gave the boys enough money to pay for Aunt Sally's wood. When they took the cart back to Uncle Silas and handed him the money, he said, 'Well, boys, you have been industrious, that's a fact; and now, if you care to drive a little further, I will give you a barrel of something for Aunt Sally to eat.'

Of course the boys were very willing to carry it; and in a little while Uncle Silas came up from his cellar, rolling a barrel which he had filled with potatoes, turnips, and apples, and on the



top his wife placed some of the nice sausages she had just made.

O, how thankful Aunt Sally was ! “ The Lord sent you through the woods that afternoon,” she said, “ to make you think of me.” And the boys felt awed as well as happy at the thought. Could it be that God, who was so great and powerful, had really directed their steps ?

As for Uncle Silas, he enjoyed his Christmas dinner all the more because some faint echoes of the angels’ song, “ good will to men,” had been awakened in his heart by the example of two boys who were learning to sing it in their youth.



XV.

Shipwrecked Children.

ONE stormy October afternoon, a small vessel was driven by the violence of the wind on to the coast of Labrador, which you know is a cold country, very far north of the United States.

The people on board the vessel were mostly fishermen from Newfoundland, who had been for several weeks engaged in catching the fish, which are very numerous during the summer, along that coast. Some of the men



had their wives and children with them ; and a very pleasant time they had had while the fine weather had lasted. But just as they were expecting to return to their homes, a fearful storm had come, and they were in danger of being shipwrecked, besides suffering intensely from cold.

As the vessel neared the shore, the captain ordered the anchors to be let down, hoping to secure it from running aground ; but the wind was too strong. Dragging the anchors along, the vessel was at last dashed violently against the rocks. All on board were brought safely to shore, though their sufferings were not ended. The coast is a wild and desolate one, and a few huts about five miles distant was the

only place of shelter from the driving snow and sleet.

The shipwrecked people started to find these huts ; but many of them sank exhausted in the snow before they reached them ; and the next morning, mothers with their infants in their arms, and many little children, were found frozen to death on the way.

Three little children were saved from this sad fate by the efforts of a boy only fourteen years old. As he was trying to find his way to the huts, he met them looking for their parents, from whom they had been separated in the confusion of landing. It was now quite dark, and they were crying bitterly with cold and fright.



The boy pitied them, and determined to do what he could to save them. He might easily have reached the place of shelter by himself; but they were too tired to walk any further, and he would not leave them. He took them to a small mound which was near, thinking it might keep off the wind. There he told them to lie down very closely together, while he collected a quantity of moss, and piled it on them until they felt quite warm.

Then, entirely unmindful of his own comfort, he sat by them and talked kindly to them, until they fell asleep.

They were still sleeping when he left them at daylight to look for their parents.

He met them when he was half-way

to the huts. How great was their joy when he told them that their little ones were alive and well !

When they had been separated in the crowd and darkness, the father and mother had hastened to the place of shelter, hoping that some one else had guided their darlings there. But when they were disappointed in this, they had no hope that they had lived through the cold, stormy night.

Yet here was a brave, unselfish boy who had watched over them and cared for them all the time. He was greatly in need of rest and food ; so they bade him go on to the huts, where he would get both, while they went alone to the place where he told them they would find their lost ones. Oh, what a happy



meeting it was ! The children were warm and comfortable ; and as they returned with their parents, they could talk of nothing but the kindness of their young preserver. With grateful hearts they all hastened to thank the noble boy, and to do what they could for his comfort. But, alas ! it was too late. Exhausted with his night's work and watching, he had been unable to reach the place of shelter, and they found him stretched lifeless on the ground. He had given his life to save theirs. Do you think they would ever forget him ?

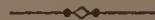
Oh, no ! When they returned to their happy, pleasant home, they must often have spoken and thought of him with gratitude and love, while they

remembered that they would never have seen it again but for his unselfish care.

He was their saviour.

Does not this story remind you of the Lord Jesus Christ, who left His bright home in glory, and came to this world, and died for us, that we might live in that bright home with Him for ever ? Every thing we enjoy now is given to us for His sake who died for us. All He asks in return is our grateful love and obedience. He wants us to be willing to give up our sinful tempers and desires, and to try to be like Him. He will give us all the help we need. Oh ! is this too much to do for one who has done so much for us ?

He says, “ Greater love hath no



man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."





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